

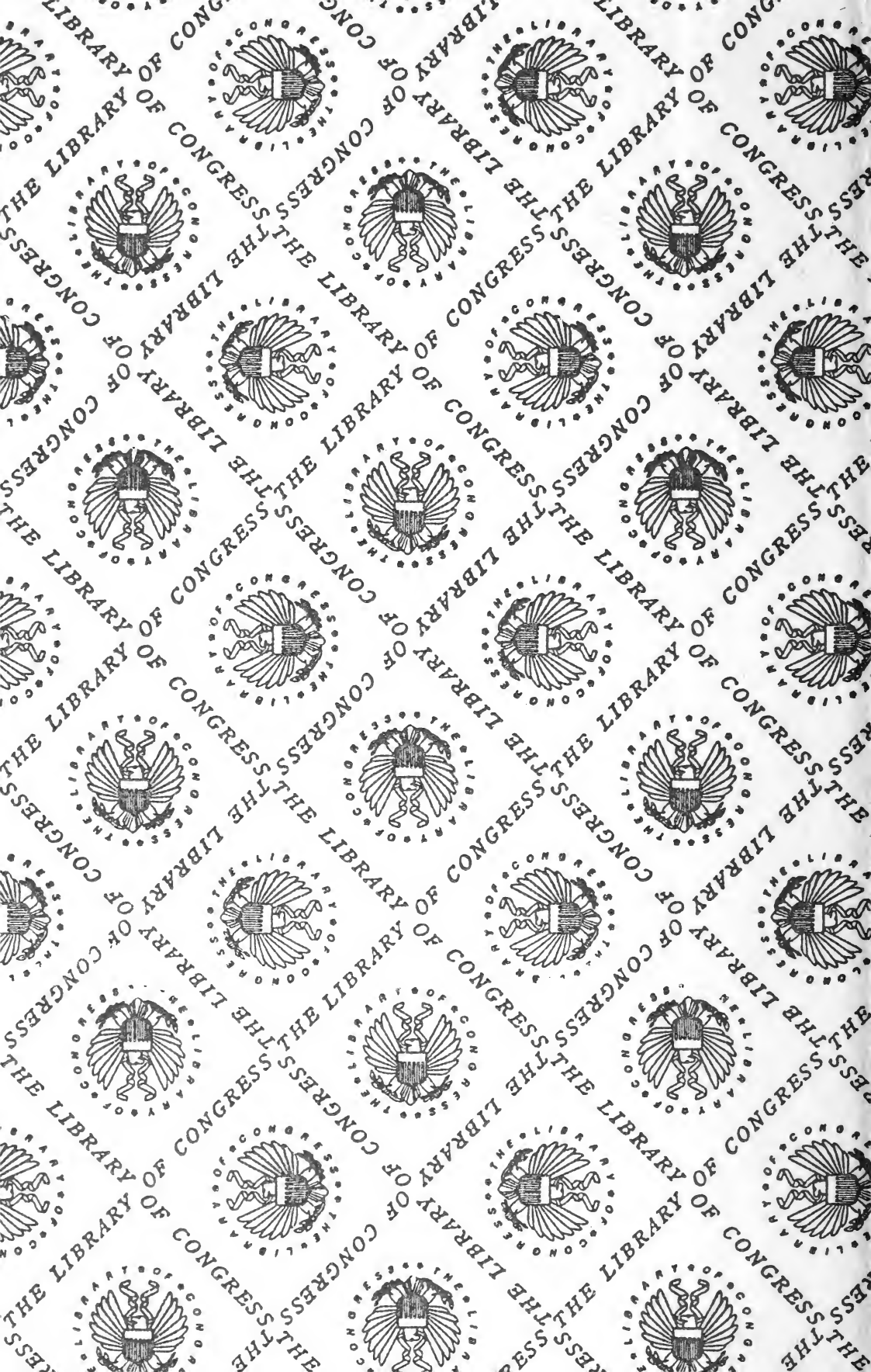
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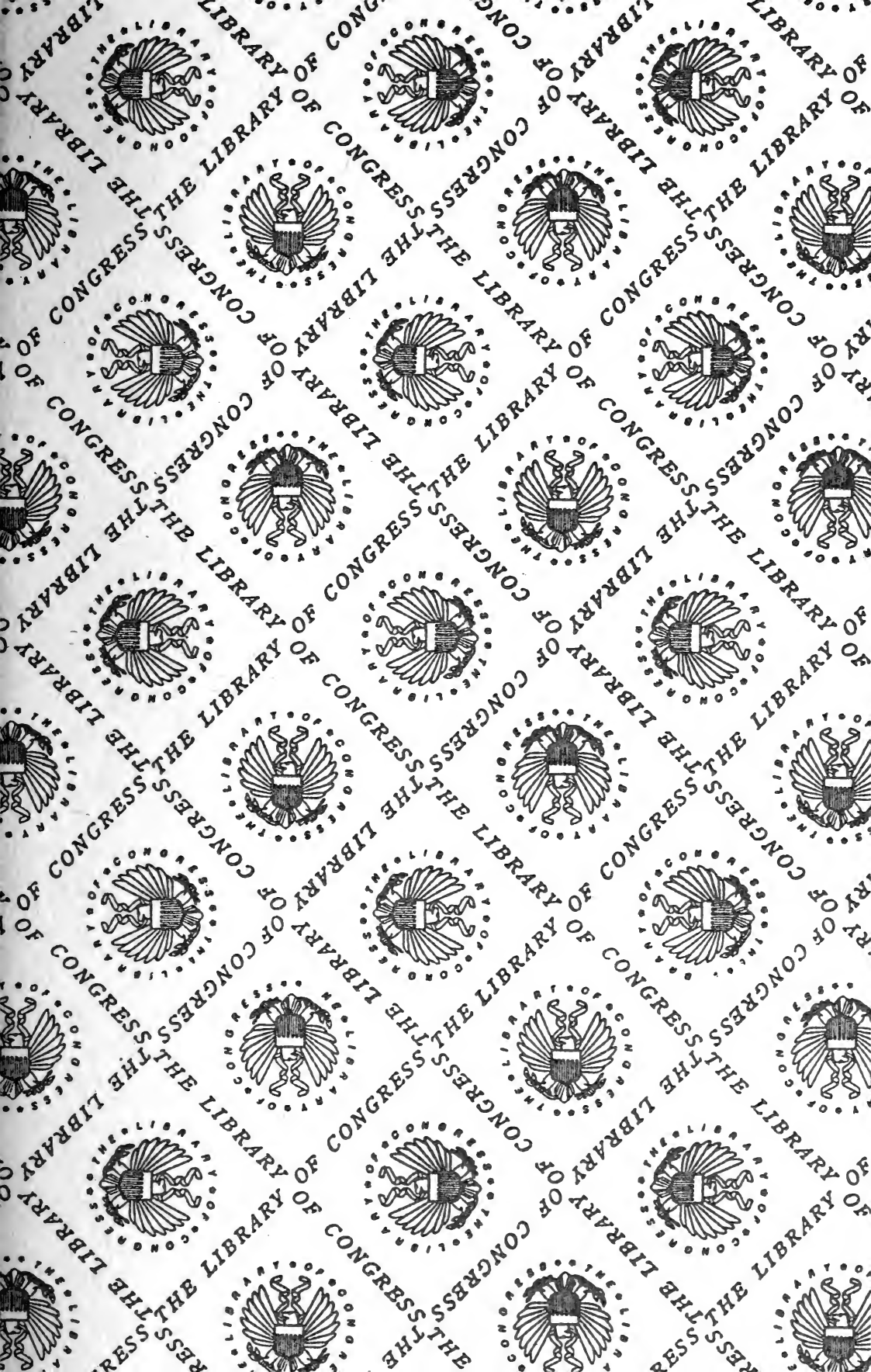
1917

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A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

A Banjo
at
Armageddon

by
Berton Braley

Author of "Things as They Are,"
"Songs of the Workaday World," etc.



New York
George H. Doran Company

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Ms. A. 14.1.17

To Helena and Fred I give a greeting
Warm as their hearts—and that is warm indeed.
Theirs is a patience kind and never fleeting
They always listen to me when I read
My various verses ; further, they appear
To face the trial with no sign of dread
And so I spout my rhythms, year on year
To Helena and Fred.

To Helena and Fred I turn full often
When critics say that I'm a piffling bard ;
The praise of these two loving friends will soften
The book reviewer's knocks, however hard.
To Helena and Fred, whose faith is great,
Whose friendship certain, and whose blood is red,
I owe a debt I cannot liquidate
Nor do I hope to, all the years ahead ;
Therefore this "little book" I dedicate
To Helena and Fred.

(Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Erving Dayton)
New York.



MY thanks and acknowledgments are due to the following publications and publishers for permission to reprint the various verses comprising "A Banjo at Armageddon" in book form: Newspaper Enterprise Association, Popular Magazine, Ainslee's Magazine, Photoplay Magazine, Smart Set, Puck, Saturday Evening Post, Chicago Tribune, Life, Green Book, New York Times, Farm and Fireside, Collier's, Motor Life, Illustrated Sunday Magazine, The Nation's Business, New York American, New Story Magazine, Country Gentleman.

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IN THE "BIG SHOW"

UP WITH THE FLAG!

UP with the flag! Up with the flag!
Up with the flag we love!
Till its colors flutter from every roof
And merge with the skies above.
And our eyes shall fill and our hearts shall thrill
With the joy that is always new,
At the grand old sight of the red and white,
And the stars in a field of blue.

Let our flag unfurled to a watching world
Be proof that we keep our trust,
That we take our part with a valiant heart
In a cause that we know is just!
Let it float on high, and if men must die
To keep it from blot or stain,
They shall meet their fate with souls elate—
And they shall not die in vain.

For the flag still holds in its ample folds
The spell of its olden fame,
And our pulses leap, and we burn down deep
With a wonderful, quenchless flame;
As the flag flings free for all to see
In the sweep of the winds above,
Up with the flag! Up with the flag!
Up with the flag we love!

THE ANCIENT THRILL

CREAKING belts and gleaming steel,
Drums that roll and fifes that squeal,
Swinging limbs and rhythmic feet—
Soldiers, marching down the street!

When the wars are past and the world at last has won
to a perfect peace,
When the blind red rage of a berserk age shall dwindle
and pale and cease,
When the guns are dumb and the droning hum of the
flying steel is stilled,
And the soil no more is drenched with gore, and the
fields that were fought are tilled,
We shall rest, in faith, from the fearful scathe and our
thanks shall rise on high,
That at length, in sooth, our strength and youth need
not go forth to die,
But peace will cost one glamour lost that may not come
again,
The thud and beat of the soldiers' feet and the swing of
the marching men!

What shall we gain for the martial strain of the fife
and drum we lose,
For the tune that skirls and the dust that swirls from
the tread of the soldiers' shoes?
Though peace be fair we shall miss the flare of the sun
on steel and brass,

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

THE ANCIENT THRILL (continued)

And the rhythm fine of each rippling line as the serried
columns pass,

We shall miss the lift of the motion swift and the lilt
of the virile tread,

That old old thrill we cannot kill while human blood
runs red,

Though our peace be deep as a dreamless sleep we
shall murmur now and then,

For the thud and beat of the soldiers' feet and the
swing of the marching men!

Creaking belts and gleaming steel,
Drums that roll and fifes that squeal,
Swinging limbs and rhythmic feet—
Soldiers, marching down the street!

THE WAR LORD'S REST

I WONDER if the kaiser's sleep is sound,
Or if in dreams that startle him awake
He hears dead voices issue from the ground
And sees the ghosts of fallen hosts that shake
Their grisly fists before his staring eyes;
I wonder if about the imperial bed
He does not feel a force malignant rise
—The living curses of the murdered dead!

I wonder if the kaiser's sleep is sound,
Or if in eerie stretches of the night,
He faces God in terrible affright,
The God he has blasphemed, the God he crowned
With Prussian bays for Prussian deeds of hate!
I wonder if he finds true rest in sleep
While little children moan and women weep
Because his lust for empire waxed too great!

He drew the sword and drenched the world in blood
He plunged mankind in agony profound;
I wonder if, amid this crimson flood,
The kaiser's sleep is sound!

“WE SERVE”

NOT by cheers alone or the flattering vaunt of
speeches

Is the strength of a nation shown in the strain of the
crucial hour

But by trust in a righteous cause and a glorious love
that reaches

Deep down to a people's soul with its searching and
poignant power,

So the flags that float on the breeze have a tarnished
and tawdry splendour

If they are not raised aloft by hands that are leal
and true,

And the test of our loyal might is the faith that we
gladly render,

Not the words that our tongues may speak, but the
tangible deeds we do.

All that our fathers dreamed of, all that they ever
sought for

When they shivered at Valley Forge and battled at
Bunker Hill,

Is again at stake in the world—a guerdon that must be
fought for;

It is ours to hold and defend with all of our strength
and will;

And if we would keep our banners proudly and freely
flying

We must gird ourselves as others have girded them-
selves of old

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

"WE SERVE" (continued)

And prove by the fact of service, living or bravely dying,

That the torch our fathers carried has never grown dim or cold.

Not by cheers alone, or waving of flags and singing

Is a nation's spirit shown, but only when brain and nerve

Are trained to the instant need—and the nation's call is bringing

Her bravest children forth—crying.

"We Serve! We Serve!"

AMERICA SPEAKS

I KNOW my sons, they seek to hide their spirit,
Ashamed to show the fire within their breasts,
And when their country calls they laugh to hear it
Greeting the summons with cool jibes and jests,
And so, with mocking tongues and lips that crinkle
Scoffing they come in answer to the call,
Take up their duties with their eyes atwinkle,
Heroes, who will not look the part at all.

They who would face the nation's foes undaunted
Pretend to be afraid at thought of strife,
Yet blithely answer "present!" when they're wanted
And fight as long as they have breath of life;
To patriotic anthems, syncopated
They dance light footed, but they love the flag
And die for it with ardor unabated
And hearts elate—and lips that hum a rag!

I know my sons; the grand old strain is in them,
And they will never fail me in my need,
But talk of fame and glory will not win them
For "no heroics" is their quiet creed;
They'll jest at service in a cynic manner
And swear that guns would make them flee pell-mell,
And yet I know they'd bear my starry banner
If need be, through the very fires of hell!

THE BOS'N'S MATE

YUP all idlers!" says the Bos'n's Mate
In the voice of a full-grown bull,
An' he doesn't care if you was up late
An' your eyes with sleep is full;
For its "'Eave an' lash 'em!" at the double-quick;
An' you does what you're told to do,
Though your eyes is heavy an' the dark is thick,
You jumps when he yells, "Turn to!"

You may not like it, but you got no choice
When his whistle's blowin' shrill,
And his bull-like beller is Your Master's Voice
When he shouts for the wash-down drill,
He roars out orders till you're durn near daft
With a dozen diff'rent calls,
From his "Stand by, sweepers!" to his "All hands aft
And lean on the whaleboat falls!"

When you're curled up comfy an' you're "calkin' off"
In the shade of the focs'l bitts,
He comes an' wakes you with a deep bass cough
An' you hops to your feet an' gits,
He's the bull-mouthed preacher of a life of stress
Through the hull of the long, long day,
An' he's only welcome when he pipes to mess,
Which he does in a shipshape way.

THE BOS'N'S MATE (continued)

Still, my time is comin' if I'll only wait

Till a few more years goes past,

An' I gets my ratin' as a bos'n's mate

—Then I'll sure get square at last,

For I'll keep them Jackies on the run, you bet,

They'll jump like I have to do,

When the Bos'n's Mate makes me toil an' sweat

With his bellerin' roar, "Turn to!"

NOTES.—"‘Eave an' lash em"—means heave out and lash hammocks.

"Calkin' off"—sleeping.

"Whaleboat falls"—ropes for hauling up the whaleboats to the davits.

THE FIREMAN

I STARTED to figurin' yesterday night
When I was a-smokin' my cob,
An' if my arithmetic's half-way near right
I've sure got a bum of a job,
For 'cordin' to dope that I've ciphered out clear
An' takin' my work as it runs,
I've shoveled, to date, in my navy career
Some fifty odd thousands of tons.

An' when I looks forward through years that's to come
An' sees myself, shovelin' coal,
Just shovelin' coal till my muscles grow numb,
I kinda gets sick to the soul
To think of the heat an' the glare of the fire
An' the scrape of the scoops on the floor.
It ain't just the work that a guy would desire
To keep at for thirty years more.

An' if there's a battle the fellows who gets
The glory is up on the decks,
A-fightin' the guns, while we parboils an' sweats,
Until we are tarry-skinned wrecks.
An' if we're the winners we drives the ship home
Which means we must shovel again,
An' if we should lose, we go under the foam
In a scaldin' hot, steely-walled pen.

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

THE FIREMAN (continued)

Still, thinkin' it over, perhaps I will stick,

For, spite of the sweat that I spill,

I'm free to sleep in when I've finished my trick,

An' I don't have to scrub or to drill.

An' if I am good maybe some day I'll land

In an oil-burnin' boat, glory be!

Where you just turn a cock—say, it otta be grand

An' I reckon Ill hang round an' see.

THE LEATHER NECKS

THERE once was a time I said "Damn the Marines!
They never do nuthin' toward earnin' their beans
But standin' around in a nice khaki suit
An' linin' up straight when we come to salute,
They're nuthin' but battleship flatties, that crew,
Just battleship flatties with nuthin' to do,
But get in the way when we scrubs or we cleans,"
Yes, onct on a time I said, "Damn the Marines."

But that was in days when I thought I was wise,
Just one of these cocky an' know-it-all guys,
Before my experience went very far,
I couldn't learn nuthin'—I needed a jar.
I got it. A bunch of us jackies ashore
Was jumped on by niggers, a thousand or more,
An' there in the jungle we dropped to our knees
An' fought for our lives in the brush an' the trees.

They had us surrounded—a lot of us drops,
The outlook was bad when them battleship cops
Comes up on the jump from the jungle somewhere
An' just takes a hand in our little affair.
We seen their old khaki and say, in that muss,
It looks like the garments of angels to us;
The niggers they left that particular scene
An' me—I was kissin' a U. S. Marine.

THE LEATHER NECKS (continued)

An' that's how I learned—as I should have known
then—

That U. S. Marines is some Regular Men,
The first ones ashore, an' the last to come back,
When trouble is started with white men or black;
Yes, call 'em "ship's flatties" an' "leathernecks," too,
But when things is started they sees 'em clear through,
They're first class He-fighters who uses their beans,
An'—only a fool would say "Damn the Marines!"

YOUR LAND!

WHAT does your country mean to you?
Merely a place to live and make money in?
Merely a hive where you gather the honey in,
Or something that's splendid and true?
Something that thrills you and holds you and thralls
you
Something your pulses can leap and beat high for
Making you ready to serve when it calls you
Something to work and to live and to die for?
What does it mean to you?

What does your country mean to you?
Only a land that your profits are swelling in,
Only a spot that you chance to be dwelling in,
Or something that thrills you through?
A warmth in your heart and a fire in the soul of you,
A glow in your eyes and a light in your brain,
A faith that is passionate, gripping the whole of you,
A vision of glory that shall not be vain?
Or only a place where there's business to do,
What does it mean to you?

What does your country mean to you?
Something to boast and brag for,
To cheer and to wave the flag for,
(The red and the white and blue)
And then to forget? Or is it

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

YOUR LAND! (continued)

A land you will give devotion,

And courage and hope exquisite,

Till all of the dreams you've sought for

And all of the goals you've fought for

In this, our land, come true?

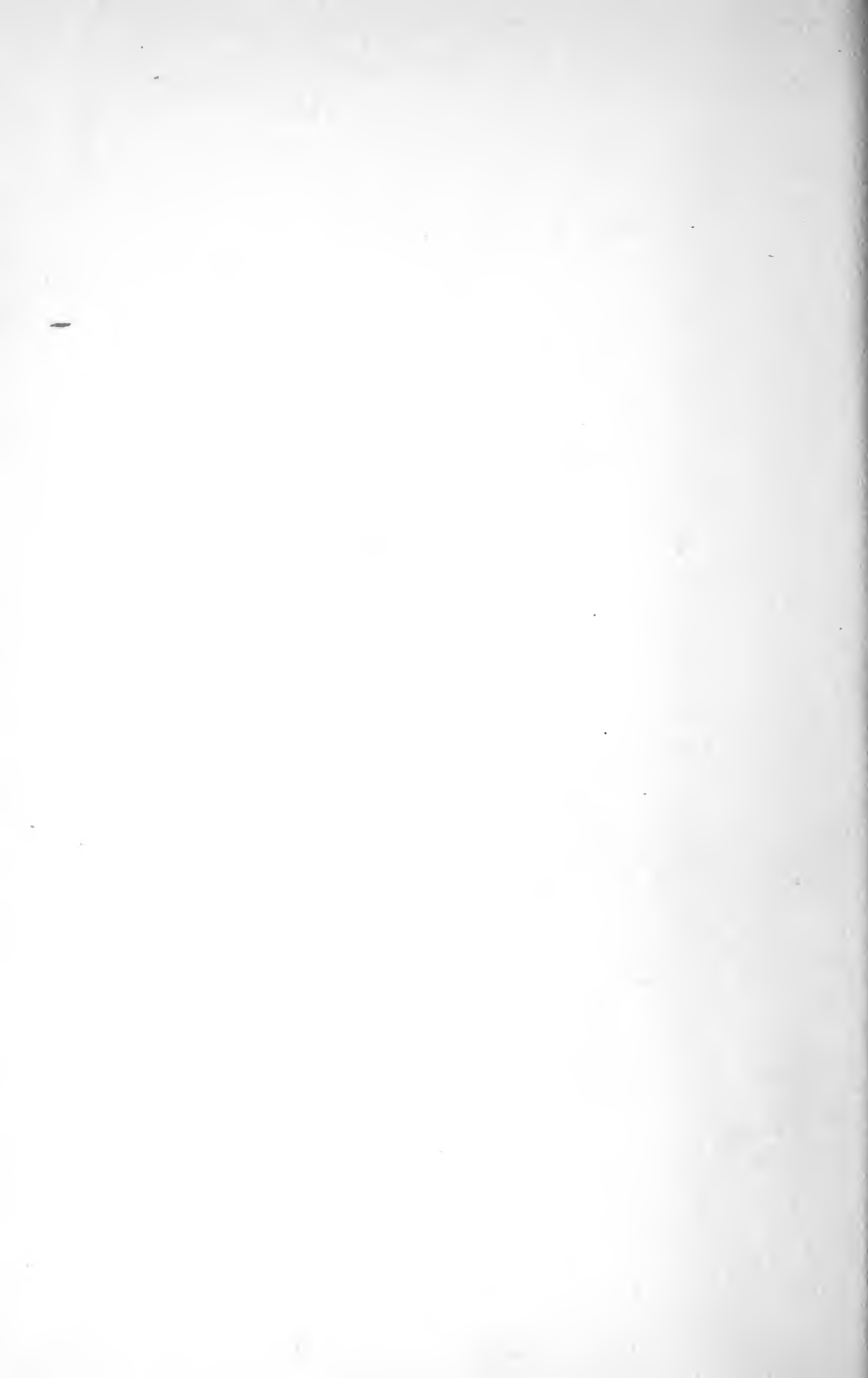
What does your country mean to you?

VERDUN

THEY shall not pass!" In dug-out and in trench
The phrase was muttered as the poilus fought.
The earth and sky were but a shambles, fraught
With gas and bursting shells and with the drench
Of shrapnel. Yet, in all the battle-stench,
'Mid horror heaped on horror past all thought
The thin line stood. A miracle was wrought;
They could not break the Will that held the French.

Each human soul must meet its own Verdun
That crisis when the armies of despair
Attack the fortress in a serried mass;
Not by brute strength may this great fight be won,
But only by the Will that can declare
In face of all Hell's hosts, "They shall not pass!"

OPEN AIR BALLADS



THE SAFETY VALVE

THERE'S something in us, every one,
A queer unrest that gets us all,
And till the game of life is done
It irritates and frets us all.
Some seek to drown it deep in drink
Despite the carpers' caviling;
And some in crime and some in—ink;
I'm travelling, just travelling!

The gambler's joy is in the game,
The lover's in his amorous
And fervid wooing. Some for fame
And all it means are clamorous.
I leave the statesman to his state,
The chairman to his gavelling,
The while with heart and mind elate
I'm travelling, just travelling.

From land to land, from sea to sea
Where life is brightest, breeziest,
I take the road that seems to me
The kindest and the easiest;
And so, though swiftly, day by day
My skein of life's unravelling,
I'll still be gayly on my way
Travelling, just travelling!

THE OLD LOVE

THEY'VE "lifted" me out of the movies
The game where I made my hit,
And they tell me I've struck into wonderful luck
To play in the real legit,
I'm featured in first class houses,
I'm *there* with the salary,
And the work's a pipe of the softest type
—But it's back to the films for me!

I'm tired of the stagy splendor,
I'm tired of the calcium glare,
And I want to play by the light of day
In the sun and the open air,
I want to swing in the saddle
In all of my western gear,
And play my part with a red, red heart
—And the camera clicking near!

I'm going back to the movies
As soon as I find a chance,
To the work that's brisk with its daily risk
Its savor of real romance,
For the regular stage seems stuffy
And the regular plays are tame,
To the thrill and throb of my old time job
When I played in the movie game!

WHO LAUGHS LAST

THE tramp looked on at the cavalcade
As the King went by in his gilt and braid;

And he gazed and said, with a heavy sigh,
"That chap is certainly living high;

"With all that a fellow would want to drink
And servants jumping at every wink,

"And plenty of money and grub—I see
That a King is a fine old thing to be!"

Then a soldier thrust the tramp aside
As the King went on in his purple pride!

Time passed—and the mighty King lay dead
And the soldiers marched with a measured tread,

And the tramp stood watching the cavalcade
As the dead King passed and the dead march played;

And he said, "Poor fellow, his game is done,
He's finished his drinks and had his fun;

"The music'll play and the wine will flow
And the dancers dance—but he won't know;

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

WHO LAUGHS LAST (continued)

"And the sun will shine and the breeze'll sigh
And color and life will greet the eye,

"And jewels will sparkle and birds will sing,
But he won't know it—that poor dead King.

"He'll just lie there in a coffin grim
—And I'm the fellow who envied him!

"Envied him—that poor dead clay,
And I've got life and the light o' day.

"A live tramp isn't so much," he said,
"But he's got the bulge on a King who's dead."

As the bier went by he raised his cap
And whispered, smiling, "Good-bye, old chap,

"I'm sorry for you!" and off he strode
Humming a song down the dusty road.

LOVE'S FEET LINGER

O H, let us go a-gipsying, a-gipsying, my own,
Along the open highway, where all the winds
have blown;
We'll leave the crowded city, the sweat and fret of
town,
And on the road to Arcady we'll go a-dancing down.
My arms shall be your shelter, your eyes shall be my
light
(A radiance more wonderful than stars which shine
at night).
Away from stony pavements, away from plots and
schemes,
We two will go a-gipsying adown the Road of
Dreams!"

"I'd like to go a-gipsying, a-gipsying with you,
But when I think it over I fear it wouldn't do.
I'd get all tanned and freckled—you know my skin is
fair—
And how I'd look without a maid to help me do my
hair!
I'd love to go a-gipsying, a-gipsying, my dear,
But I should never like the food the gipsies eat, I fear;
And though, perhaps, by daytime, the sunshine may be
gold,
I'm very sure when evening came I'd catch my death
of cold;

LOVE'S FEET LINGER (continued)

And what with all my luggage, my gowns and lingerie,
We'd make but little progress on the Road to Arcady!
You be a gipsy, sweetheart, a gipsy nice and brown,
And tell me all about it when you come back to town;
For me to go were foolish—and most improper, too!
So I won't go a-gipsying, a-gipsying with you!"

THE IMPULSE

PARTNER, I went to a picture show,
An' gazin' upon the screen,
My old fool eyes began to glow
When they put on a western scene.
The play itself was a foolish reel
Of villains an' gold an' fight,
But the country—partner, it made me feel—
—Well, it kinda bedimmed my sight;

For there was the narrow desert trail
That wanders across the way,
An' the dust that swirls in the sudden gale
An' the sage brush, dry an' grey,
An' the coulee deep, an' the water hole
An' the old prospector's claim,
An' all the sights that had stirred my soul
Before I got old—an' tame.

An' those actor folks was western, too,
For they rode with a sort of swing
Like the old time cowboys used to do
When a cattleman still was king.
They rode their bronc's with a careless grace
Through country rough an' bare,
It was only a reel—but my blood *would* race,
For the scenes that I loved were there!

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

THE IMPULSE (continued)

I guess the country has seen a change
Its wildest of tales is told,
It ain't the west that I used to range
In the rollicking days of old,
But the peaks are white with the ancient snow
An' the sky is the same blue dome,
Partner, I went to a picture show
—An' I reckon I'm goin' home!

THE HIGH TRAIL

I'M sick of your mobs and machinery,
I'm weary of second hand thrills,
I'm tired of your two-by-four scenery,
Your nice little valleys and hills;
I want to see peaks that are bare again
And ragged and rugged and high,
To know the old tang in the air again
And the blue of the clear western sky!

Once more in each fibre and fold of me
I feel the old wonderment brew,
And again has the spell taken hold of me,
The spell of the mountains I knew;
So the city means nothing but slavery,
And my heart is like lead in my breast,
And life will be stale and unsavory
Till I stand on the hills of the west.

Let the homebodies "hobo" and "rover" me,
Poor plodders, they never can know
How the fret for the hills has come over me
And the fever that bids me to go
Away from traditions gone mouldering,
Away from the paths overtrod,
To the place where the mountains are shouldering
Right up to the Archways of God!

THE SEA WIND

BELOW the skyline drops the shore,
The long, grim graybacks lift and fall,
Against the bows they crash and roar,
The engine throbs, the sea gulls call,
And salt against my pallid face
There comes the challenge bold and free
Of that world tramp who roams through space,
The wind—the wind of open sea!

Here is no breeze of drowsy lanes
Nor breath of crowded towns and stale,
This is the wind that sweeps the mains
And leaps along the trackless trail,
And with its savor on my lips
The ancient joy comes back to me,
Of those who dared—in Viking ships—
The wind—the wind of open sea!

It blows from out the vasty skies
Across the tumbling sea's expanse,
It stings to deeds of high emprise,
It sings of glamor and romance;
Chill, clean and strong—my pulses leap,
My heart is filled with buoyant glee,
I greet the rover of the deep,
The wind—the wind of open sea!

GYPSY SONG

THE wind, and the sky, and the sun,
And the open trail and free,
A staff and a pack—and One
To take to the road with me,
Over the hills that lure,
Under the trees that sway,
Laughing and strong, and—poor,
Out on the wander way!

The wind, and the sun, and the sky,
A star-strewn vault at night,
And two hearts beating high,
Athrill with an old delight!
Out from the fret of the town,
Free of the ties that gall,
Venturing up and down,
Under the wander thrall.

The sky, and the sun, and the wind,
And One on the road I fare,
Slender and gypsy-skinned,
My gypsy ways to share.
Life that is void of stress,
Love that is leal and true;
The road—and the wind's caress,
Sun and the sky—and you!

THE CALL

SPRING comes on, and they're calling again—
The trails that I used to know,
And I feel in my heart I am falling again
To the ways that the gypsies go,
And the wagon-train that is crawling again,
Lazy and calm and slow.

Spring comes on, and I'm dreaming again
Of the camp by the dusty road,
And the Romni's kettle steaming again
In front of her tent abode,
And the teeth of the gypsies gleaming again
As they chant in the Romany code.

Spring comes on, and I'm learning again
How the fever to go is strong,
And deep in my veins it is burning again
For the life that I lived so long.
And somehow my feet are turning again
To the lilt of a gypsy song.

Spring comes on, and they're calling again—
The ways that I used to know,
And the spell of the road is thralling again
With all of its olden glow,
As the gypsy train goes crawling again
Lazy and calm and slow!

AROUND THE FIRE

WHEN we've finished washing the plates of tin,
When the darkness falls and the gang comes
in,

That's the time when the tales and the talk begin

In the circle about the fire;

The talk of the way the day was spent,

Of the things we did and the roads we went,

Of pleasant ventures that brought content

And sated the heart's desire.

The pipes are lighted, the fellows sit

Or sprawl about as the shadows flit,

And there is freedom of thought and wit

Till the light of the embers dims;

And then comes singing—from foolish tunes

Of "pretty maidens" and "kindly moons,"

To old, old songs like your mother croons,

Soft lullabies—or hymns.

The night breeze rustles the leaves above,

And we talk of the things we are fondest of,

The men we like and the girls we love,

Who make life worth the fight,

Till the ash grays over the glowing coals

And the spirit of drowsiness controls,

And each man into his blanket rolls,

With the sleepy word, "Good night!"

SAILING

THERE are those who prate of the craft whose gait
is that of a railroad train,
Who sound their note for the motor boat or the mar-
vellous hydroplane,
But the craft I love has sails above and all of the stays
and gear
And her lines are neat as the limbs and feet of a beau-
tiful slender deer;
She is made for work in the storm and murk yet fit for
the slightest stir
When the winds express by a soft caress their love and
their joy in her;
She is tight and sound when the billows pound—a joy
to the sportsman's heart,
And I know she'd tack round the world and back if
ever we made the start.

Oh it's great to drift on the easy lift and swell of the
summer sea,
When the wind is soft and the flag aloft is fluttering
lazily,
And you smoke and doze as the light wind blows and
you loaf in a white-winged craft
And you hear the cry of the gulls that fly along o' the
waves abaft,
But it's better to feel the lurch and reel as she heels to
a booming breeze,

SAILING (continued)

When the blocks all creak and the top-stays shriek to
the crash of the tumbling seas,
When the sheet is tight with the mainsail's might and
the gunnels awash beneath
And she hits her pace in the rushing race with a snowy
bone in her teeth.

Oh, then the blood is a glorious flood that's thrilling
your body through,
And the salt perfume of the flying spume is breath of
your life to you;
You can feel her plunge when the swift winds lunge
and the wake is a swirl of foam,
Till you change your route as you come about and
start on the leg for home.
Through tingling spray you slash your way, the tiller
firm in hand,
While your pulses leap as on you sweep—man, but it's
grand! It's Grand!
Let 'em sing their fill of what they will, they can chant
what joy they please
But me for the lilt of a yacht atilt in the grip of the
booming breeze.

TENNIS

YOU may speak of tennis lightly if you choose,
You may call it "mollycoddle," but it's not,
And you'll give the sport its right and proper dues
If you try a game of singles when it's hot!
That'll teach you in a hurry what is what,
That'll make your forehead run with honest sweat,
For you'll find you must be Johnny-on-the-spot
When the ball is whizzing hard across the net!

It's "Thirty love!" and "Thirty fif!"
And "Thirty all!" and "Serve!"
And "Smash him back a low one,"
And "Cut him back a curve!"
But when it's "Forty thirty!"
And you think you've "cooked his goose,"
Why, you miss a sizzling Lawford—
And the score is deuce!

When you cut 'em to the corner on the tape,
When you lob 'em over easy—out of reach,
Watch the other fellow twist clear out of shape,
Listen to him as he puts his thoughts in speech!
But—you watch him or he'll slam you back a peach
That'll burn the very breezes as it flies,
That'll hit the distant corner with a screech
While you look around with wonder in your eyes.

TENNIS (continued)

It's "Love fifteen!" or twice as bad
Or worse than that, maybe,
And you cannot "slice 'em proper"
And you're almost up a tree,
But you brace to "Thirty forty!"
While he's playing fast and loose,
And you put a hot one over—
And the score is deuce!

Yes, you've got to be a live one—all alert
When you're waiting for the service—on your toes,
With the perspiration coming through your shirt
And the sunshine starting blisters on your nose!
There is not a single instant you can doze.
You have got to "hurry hurry!" for your fun,
And there isn't any mollicoddle pose
In a lively set of singles in the sun!

Your nerves are at a tension,
Your muscles just the same,
You've got to be of rubber
And steel to "play the game!"
When you're using every effort
And you're planning every ruse,
And the score's forever shifting
Back to deuce, deuce, deuce!

ONLY A DOG

SOMEBODY poisoned my dog to-day,
Though he never did any one ill,
And so he is through with his canine play
And his wagglety tail is still.
No more shall I walk in the fields with him
Along at my side to jog,
And—I don't care if my eyes are dim—
Somebody poisoned my dog!

He was homely, I know, as a dog could be,
And only a mongrel, too;
But I loved him and he loved me
As people and dogs may do.
Nothing on earth could disturb his trust
Or his love and his faith befog,
And now he lies here in the dust—
Somebody poisoned my dog!

He crawled to my feet and he licked my hand
And then with a gasp he died;
And—though some people can't understand—
I patted his head—and cried!
For it isn't funny to lose a friend
From off of this "earthly cog,"
And he was loyal unto the end—
Somebody poisoned my dog!

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

ONLY A DOG (continued)

I wonder how any one could have done

This poor little fellow harm;

But here he lies—his race is run—

Though his body's still soft and warm.

My life is lived on a peaceful plan,

My pace is a quiet jog,

But—I wish I could find the snake of a man

Who poisoned my little dog!

CITY BALLADS

PRISONER

THE hills call, and the roads call, and the sea,
 With voices of remembered deeds and days,
Of winds that roam the world forever free
 Tempting the rover to the wander-ways;
Yet though these voices hold their spell for me
 Still do I linger in the city's maze,
Thrall'd by the loud conglomerate minstrelsy
 Of rumbling whistles and of hurrying feet,
 Of roaring traffic and the clamant beat
 Of hammers on the ringing ribs of steel;
This is the city's summons, this the call
Drowning the gentler voices, one and all,
 In rolling music of its vast appeal!

And if I seek the road, the sea, the hills,
A little space their ancient glamor fills
 My utmost need; but presently I know
A longing for the tumult and the press
 The fret and haste, the glitter and the show,
The vast and never sated restlessness
 And all the sounds of avenue and slum
Which make the city; when I hear her voice
I turn my footsteps homeward—and rejoice!
 The city calls—I come!

MODERN

NEW clothes, new hats, new streets, new flats,
New restaurants and drinking places;
New gems and gauds, new shams and frauds,
New poor, new rich, new sights, new faces,
New truths, new lies, new laughs, new cries,
New shows, new fads, new lofty prices,
New gilded baits, new loves, new hates,
New fashions, virtues, and new vices.

New crimes, new jails, new bargain sales,
New spendthrifts, misers, thieves and gleaners,
New foreign earls, new pretty girls,
New servants and pneumatic cleaners,
New failures, yes and new success,
New news of life that ever varies,
New cheap cigars, new Broadway stars,
New suburbs and new cemeteries.

New pleasures, pains, new water mains,
New slang, new jokes, new songs, new dances,
New clubs, new signs, new foods, new wines,
New snug retreats—and new advances,
New swell hotels, new “tubes” and “L’s,”
New homes just gladdened by the stork,
New sport, new noise, new woes, new joys,
New names, new fames, new games—NEW
YORK!

THE MOUTH-WATERING PLACE

THE candy shop's certainly highly attractive
I gaze in its windows each day,
And wish, with a wisher decidedly active,
To sample the wares on display;
A fruiterer's window is quite "prepossessin'"
With grapes and with apples galore,
But best of them all is the Delicatessen
Store.

One gazes with glee on delectable salads
And roasts that are luscious and red,
On pickles and cheese that are worthy of ballads
And beautiful caraway bread;
To know what to buy keeps you plannin' and
guessin'
You want to get things by the score,
For tempting indeed is the Delicatessen
Store.

Now some of us hanker for riches enormous
For autos and aeros and such,
For houses to shelter and fur coats to warm us
But those don't appeal to me much;
If I had my wish there'd be only one blessin'
One single rich gift I'd implore,
I'd think myself rich were I only possessin'
A Delicatessen
Store!

THE SPELL OF THE RIALTO

WE killed 'em all along the line
 From Rochester to Kokomo,
 You ought to hear 'em boost the show,
They certainly did like it fine!
We used that old S. R. O. sign
 Night after night, day after day,
But oh, I longed to see 'em shine
 —The Lights along the Great White Way.

I had no kick on salary
 The tour had paid, and paid us well,
 From Portland, O, to New Rochelle
Things were as good as they could be;
Big bands, big houses,—praises free
 For all the actors and the play,
But still they kept on calling me,
 —The Lights along the Great White Way!

The show is coining money still
 And pleasing every joyous Rube,
 —I reckon I'm an awful Boob,
But, well—I sort of chafed, until
I had a chance to quit the bill
 Give up my part and draw my pay
—And I came home to know the thrill
 Of Lights along the Great White Way.

THE SPELL OF THE RIALTO (continued)

The Big Town's got me—God knows why
It never seemed to treat me fair
I've starved and bummed and struggled there
And fortune never raised me high
Yet when I'm gone for long, I sigh
And dream about it, night and day,
Until again *they* greet my eye
—The Lights along the Great White Way.

Go on, speak all that's on your tongue
I'm every kind of fool you say,
But, brother, I am back among
The Lights along the Great White Way!

THE FERRY BOAT

THE haughty liner swaggers by and hoots her scorn
 of me
For she will buffet combers high and cross the open
 sea,
And she's the grandest thing afloat as all the world
 may know
While I am but a common boat that shuttles to and
 fro;
And yet, she needn't be so proud, for in my humble
 way,
I carry twenty times her crowd and do it every day,
If she should miss her sailing date few worries would
 increase
But let the ferries stop and straight a city's work will
 cease.

Back and forth, back and forth
 Morning, noon and night,
Unromantic, commonplace,
 Clumsy to the sight,
Keeping up the city's life
 Work and love and fight.

The tug boats scutter round about in search of work
 to do,
The small boats putter in and out the path that I pur-
 sue,
And ugly groups of barges drift adown the river wide

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

THE FERRY BOAT (continued)

Or frowsy-canvased schooners lift their anchors from
the tide,
They know adventure now and then, the new, the
quaint, the strange,
I only serve the need of men with never turn nor
change,
And yet of this much I may boast, with never-tiring
toil,
I carry forth the human host to labor or to spoil.

Back and forth, back and forth
That's my little run
Bringing people to their toil
Home when it is done,
Keeping up the city's life
Work and love and fun!

I bring the farmer's boy uncouth with wonder in his
heart
But who with dauntless soul of youth will storm the
city's mart,
I bring the joyous and the sad, the mighty and the
spent,
The young, the old, the good, the bad, the meek or
insolent,
Thronging my level decks they come because the city
calls
And soon their myriad voices hum within the crowded
walls,
I take them to their daily work with pickaxe or with
pen,
And when the evening shadows lurk I start them home
again.

THE COMMUTER

HE eats his breakfast worriedly
His eye upon the clock
Then seeks the station hurriedly
And runs the final block.
He has a grave propensity
To miss the 8.15
Which brings that strained intensity
Upon his harried mien.

His day is spent in laboring
For gold with fervid vim
So that commuters neighbouring
May have no edge on him,
And just to make more humorous
His day of toil and fret
His wife has errands numerous
Which he must not forget.

He hurries back in summer time
To mow and rake the lawn.
In winter's greyer, glummer time
When all the grass is gone
He rushes homeward hastily
To shovel off the snow
And heap it up quite tastily
Or make the furnace go.

THE COMMUTER (continued)

When shows and things occur by night
He rarely sees them through
His train—ah poor suburbanite
Leaves at 11.02,
And yet with noble bravery
He glories in his chains
Although his life's a slavery
To schedules and trains!

THE LONESOME COP

I USED to be in where the people was thick and the
lights was a regular glare
Where the taxicabs honked and the trolley bells
clanged and the traffic was moving for fair,
I used to be standing and waving my hands in a calm
and imperial way
And the people on foot and the people in cars—well I
reckon they had to obey;
And the men they would nod and the pretty girls smile
in a way that was certainly fine
In the beautiful time when I stood on my post where
the lights of the theatres shine,
But I got myself queered with the boss of the ward
and “Out to the suburbs!” says he
So I’m padding the grit in this desolate spot and it
don’t make no ten strike with me.

For there’s nobody comes and there’s nobody goes and
there’s nothing that happens at all
Excepting the voice of a cat now and then or a baby
that lets out a squall
For this is a lonesome suburbanite joint where the peo-
ple turn in before ten,
And I walk up and down on my nice little beat and
then do it over again,
So I yawn and I sigh and I sigh and I yawn till the
milk wagons come about four

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

THE LONESOME COP (continued)

And I talk with the drivers a minute or two and then
go on yawning some more,
I wish I was back in the heart of the town where
there's something to watch and to see
This post might be fine for old Robinson Crusoe, but
say—it's a lemon for me!

ON THE CITY STREET

FREE of all enslavement,
Free of fret and care,
Youth, upon the pavement;
Dances to the air
Of a street piano
While a joyous note
Comes in shrill soprano
From each childish throat.

As the tune is ringing
Through the dingy street
Blithe young bodies swinging
Dance on rhythmic feet;
'Mid the city's clamor
'Mid the smoke and grime,
Comes the golden glamor
Of a vanished time.

Here, in garments scanty,
Somehow we can see,
Many a young bacchante
Many a dryad free,
Somehow we are glancing
At a pagan clan,
—Fauns and wood-nymphs dancing
To the Pipes o' Pan!

THE LONESOMEST TIME

THE lonesomest time and the lonesomest place
And the drabbest and dreariest, too,
Is not in a desert of limitless space
Nor the heart of a forest where leaves interlace
And the owls sound their spooky "To-whooo-oo!"
No, the lonesomest place is a white light café
When the guests and the waiters are all gone away
And in place of the lights and the babel
There's only the clock-tick, the light from the street,
A smell of damp floors and of stale things to eat,
And the sight of the chairs on each table,
The chairs stacked up high on each table.

Why, it's scary to peek through the doorway and see
That dining place empty and dead,
Where, earlier, crowds of gay people would be
With music and chatter and laughter and glee
And the wine glowing, yellow and red.
It's ghostly and spooky and shrouded and grey
When the guests and the waiters have all gone away
And the murk in the corners is sable,
And once you have seen it so gloomy and cold
It never seems quite the same place as of old.
The glamor is vanished, and tarnished the gold,
When the chairs are piled up on each table,
The empty chairs stacked on each table.

A PANTOUM OF REHEARSAL

LADIES, we'll try that again.
Sing, for the Love of Mike, sing!
Hi there, you bum chorus men,
You've got to *work* in this thing.

Sing, for the Love of Mike, sing!
Quit falling over your feet.
You've got to *work* in this thing;
One—two—three—four—and repeat.

Quit falling over your feet—
Say, could you dance on a bet?
One—two—three—four and repeat
—Now for the little soubrette.

Say, could you dance on a bet?
Let's have the milliner's song;
Now comes the little soubrette—
No, no, you're singing it wrong!

Let's have the milliner's song.
Wow! But you're rotten to-day!
No, no—you're singing it wrong;
It won't get over that way!

Wow! but you're rotten to-day—
Worse than you commonly are.

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

A PANTOUM OF REHEARSAL (continued)

It won't get over that way—
Where in the hell is the star?

(Worse than you commonly are)
Gee, but you give me a pain!
Where in the hell is the star?
Oh, how de do, Miss Elaine!

(Gee, but you give me a pain;
Making the crowd of us wait)
Oh, how de do, Miss Elaine!
Oh no, you're not very late.

(Making the crowd of us wait—
This thing is growing a bore.)
Oh no, you're not very late,
Now, let's get busy once more!

This thing is growing a bore.
Hi there, you bum chorus men!
Now let's get busy once more—
Ladies, we'll try that again!

AN EASY TASK

I'VE a couple of Tango dancers hired
They're a regular, surething riot,
There's a tropical "set" that I've acquired
And I'm waiting a chance to try it.
I've a first class circus contortionist
And I'm simply compelled to use him
For I've got him down on the salary list
And there isn't a chance to lose him.

I've some scenery left from an Eskimo play
And some costumes of 1820,
And a heavy man who is drawing pay
And drawing it good and plenty,
There's a pantomime team that I got from France
And a Viennese girl soprano
And a comic guy with a freakish dance
Who's a whale on the grand piano.

I've got my hooks on a troupe of seals
That act in a way most human,
And some wonderful moving picture reels
And a top notch leading woman,
People are spending to beat the band
And I sure do want to hit 'em
—Look over these features I have on hand
And make me a play to fit 'em!

TO DOUG.

MOST of the movie folk fill me with weariness,
Most of the films are a horrible bore,
Chaplin instils me with feelings of dreariness,
Arbuckle thrills me with thirst for his gore;
Yet when I notice the placards that feature you
I join the line, like the veriest bug,
How can I help it, you blithe, healthy creature, you,
Doug!

You are the spirit of Pan at his happiest
You are a faun that is brought up to date,
You are the huskiest, liveliest, snappiest
Picture of youth in its joyous estate;
Huge are the sums that the gossips are saying you
Add every day to your bank account snug;
Well, you're worth more than whatever they're paying
you,
Doug!

Why, just your smile—who can figure the worth of it?
Leaping so boyishly out of the screen,
All of the whimsical, magical mirth of it
Welling up fresh from a heart that is clean,
You're like a breeze with the tang of the west to it,
Ever a tonic and never a drug,
You bring romance with a glorious zest to it,
Doug!

THE DIFFERENCE

TRAGEDY stalks about the stage
A picture of gloom and woe
And mouths its agony, pain and rage
For all of the house to know.

But Tragedy, out in the world of men
Is decked in the garb of glee,
And we know it not when it meets our ken
In the make-up of Comedy.

It greets our eyes in the smile of a friend
In sounds in a voice that's gay
And we never learn till the very end
That Tragedy ruled the play.

Though woes be plenty and joys be sparse,
All life is a game grotesque,
So Tragedy plays the part of farce
Or poses in cheap burlesque.

It hides the marks of the scourging rods
And plods through its daily task
And screens its face from the gallery gods
With a grin for a tragic mask!

FARCE AND FRIVOL

AMBITION

I WANT to be a Highbrow,
I want to take my stand,
With elevated eye-brow
And manner very grand,
Amid the tea-room chatter
And learnedly rehearse
Exactly what's the matter
With all the universe.

I want to be a Highbrow
With esoteric ways,
Who looks, with very wry brow,
On things that others praise;
Who passes cruel strictures
On artists who can draw,
But raves o'er Cubist pictures
With rapt adoring awe!

I want to be a Highbrow
Who follows mystic creeds,
And laurel-decks the shy brow
Of poets no one reads,
I'd join the weird outré rites
Of ultra Highbrow bands,
Discussing unknown playwrights,
Whom no one understands.

AMBITION (continued)

I want to be a Highbrow,
With air of perfect poise,
Who lifts a scornful eyebrow
At all the rough world's noise,
Oh, I could fill with glee so
Desirable a shelf,
—A Highbrow seems to be so
Delighted with himself!

PLAYING SAFE

WELL, I was out a walkin' on the barren western
plains,
When I seen a schooner scuddin' on her after anchor
chains,
To the captain then I said
"What you got inside yer head?
It must be tar an' oakum fer it certain isn't brains.

"I have seen a purple camel in a corner hardware store
I have seen a whale performin' on a stick of two by
four
I have seen an' I have heard
Things that never has occurred,
But I never seen a schooner sailin' on the land before.

"So I asks you, kind an' pleasant, an' I hopes you'll
answer me
Why you sails across the hummocks which is rough as
they can be,
Seems to me yer course is quaint
An' some hard upon yer paint
An' besides, a sailin' vessel ought 'a sail upon the sea."

The captain of the schooner takes another chew of
plug
An' replies to me in accents like the whistle of a tug

PLAYING SAFE (continued)

An' I has to stand an' hear
While he tells my whole career
In a manner most offensive like a tough an' ugly thug.

But at last he gives his reasons, which is simple an'
complete,
Says he, "I sails my schooner o'er the fields of wavin'
wheat
An' keeps her right on land
Just because, you understand
If she happens for to founder I won't have to wet me
feet.

"For oh I does abominate the water when it's wet
An' the last time I was ship wrecked I won't never
more forget
For because the waves they rolled
An' I ketched an' awful cold
An' I quit the briny ocean an' I'm quittin' of it yet!"

Then he hoists his scupper capstan an' he reefs the
after rail
An' he starts the log to rollin' an' the schooner hits the
trail
An' I waves my hat to him
Till his porty form is dim
An' below the far horizon comes the moon arisin' pale.

THE BAD MANNERED PIRATE

WE were drinkin' of our tea
Captain Harrigan an' me
When a pirut chieftain hailed us an' he says to us,
says he,
"I demand yer little ship!"
Captain takes another sip
An' he says to that there pirut, "Very well sir, let 'er
rip."

So the piruts clumb aboard
An' a pirut song they roared
An' they went an' took the treasure which was quite a
little hoard!
They was kind of rough, it's true
For they butchered of the crew
An' they strangled all the passengers, which wasn't
nice to do!

We went on a drinkin' tea,
Captain Harrigan an' me
Though he says, "I'm kinda thinkin' them there piruts
is too free.
True, they ain't a troublin' us
An' there ain't no use to fuss,
But that captain of the piruts is a most insultin' cuss."

They was pretty coarse an' loud
Heavy faced an' beetle browed

THE BAD MANNERED PIRATE (continued)

An' their talk was somethin' awful even fer a pirut
crowd

Says the Captain, "I declare
It ain't really my affair
But that chief of all the piruts is a party I can't bear!"

He had scurcely said the word
When a wicked curse was heard
An' a most amazin' outrage then an' there at once oc-
curred,
Fer that pirut chief he come
Havin' drunk a lot of rum
An' he overturns our tea cups—"Well," the Captain
says, "I vum!"

"I have stood a awful lot,"
Says the Captain, gettin' hot,
"But when you spills my tea cup you has hit a tender
spot
I kin stand it fer to see
All my treasure took from me
An' my crew a gettin' slaughtered, but you mustn't
spill my tea."

So we started fer that bunch
Which had spoiled our tea an' lunch
An' we shot 'em an' we hacked 'em an' we give 'em
punch fer punch
An' at last when we was through
Out of all that pirut crew
There was nuthin' but the chieftain, which his gills
was very blue.

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

THE BAD MANNERED PIRATE (continued)

Then we laid him on the deck
Right amid the blood an' wreck
An' we boiled that pirut chieftain pourin' hot tea down
his neck
Which, when done, why Cap an' me
Went on sippin' of our tea
As is the common custom of all sailormen at sea!

LEARNING TO WRITE

(Can You Translate?)

MY ink eraser's worn quite through
From rubbing out mistakes
Which, spite of all that I can do,
My fool typewriter makes.
For when I try to make an "a"
(One has to write a few)
In some quite dark and devious way
I spell it with a "q."
Qnd thqt, qs you cqn plqinly see,
Is likely to embqrrqss me.

Now, "e" 's a letter used so oft
It surely seems that I
Should find it really very soft
To handle cleverly.
And yet, when writing in a sweat,
I find—a dreadful bore—
That where I wanted "e" I get
Instead of "e" a "4."
Th4 which, as anyon4 may not4,
Do4s not improv4 what I "hav4 wrot4."

Then "t" and "y" or "y" and "u,"
Which seem beneath a spell,

LEARNING TO WRITE (continued)

Transpose and get themselves askew

The same as "p" and "l."

The "," and the "?"

Get changed about in place,

Until you'd think that in the dark

I'd tried my words to trace.

Yhis syrange pecupiaritt

Is not? you know? a thing of glee.

Then oftentimes a "b" I find

When what I want is "n,"

Or with quotation marks in mind

I get a "2"—and then

To that I add this little /

When I but sought a .

And other errors, too, are mine,

I count them by the myriad.

And when my little sobg is sung,

I'm often forced to mutter, 2STUBG2/

Morqp.

When writibg things on your mqchibe

Be syre tour ey4s are v4ru keen

Qnd thqt uour fing4rs do not stray

On k4ys they wer4 not meqbt to lpay,

For oyherwise? ther4 is no dount?

Your 2copt2 cab't be pyzzl4d out/

N4RYOB NRQP4U

(Berton Braley).

YE FINAL TESTE

Being Ye Most Solemn and Veracious Ballad of John
Henry

JOHN HENRY was a college Man
Of Herculean mold,
A Hammer Thrower great was he
A Footballe player bold,

Atte baseballe he was eke no slouche
Atte Golf he was a crack,
He did excell atte rowing, too,
And also on ye track!

One summer atte ye close of school
Whenas ye days grew warm,
John Henry cried, "I will go forthe
To labour on a farm;

"Yea, I will be a Hired Man
Engaged in Husbandry
Accumulating strength and tan
And shekels, too, maybe."

Ye farmer hailed him with much joy
And hired him on ye spotte,
And sware by all his cows and pigges
To show him what is what.

YE FINAL TESTE (continued)

“Oh he shall rise before ye dawn
And swink ye livelong day,
And he shall find how toil and work
Are different than play,

“His brow shall sweat, his backe shall ache
With harvest work and such,
I guesse I’ll show this Ath-a-lete
That he ain’t such a much.”

John Henry ploughed, John Henry sowed,
John Henry harrowed, too,
He pitched and mowed ye new mown hay
With muscles strong and true,

He laboured in ye harvest field
Whenas ye sun beat down
He wore ye husky farmer out,
This college boy from town;

He worked all day—yet danced each night
“This job’s a cinch,” quoth he,
“Lay on Macduff, for I am tough,
Ye cannot weary me.”

Then uppe there spoke ye Farmer’s Wife
“John Henry,” then, she cried,
“Ye hired girl hath gone to town
I want your help inside.”

She bade him sweep, she bade him dust
And help to wash ye duds,
She bade him feed ye pigs and chicks
And peel ye dinner spuds,

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

YE FINAL TESTE (continued)

She made him cook and scrub ye floors
And wash ye dishes, too,
She kept him always on ye jump
With never rest in view.

And when ye housework all was done
"John Henry," then said she,
"There is ye milking yet to do
And ye must milk with me."

John Henry he was worn and wan
And pale of face and browe
But gallantly he took his paile
And sat beside ye cow,

He drew ye milk from bossies Three
He tried to make it four,
But lo, his mightie arms grew limp
He fainted on ye floor,

'Twas long before they brought him to
His strength had all but fled,
John Henry, College Ath-a-lete
Was really sick abed;

Yette when she'd helped to tuck him in
Ye farmer's littel spouse
Went trotting blithely to ye barn
And finished up ye cows!

B-r-r-r-

NOW the morning bath is colder and the winds are
sharper, bolder

And the snow and sleet are falling here and there,
Now the city lights are blazing with a radiance amaz-
ing

And the pleasure-seekers gather in their glare;
Now the coal men gently snicker as the bank roll's
growing thicker

While they're grabbing all the traffic will allow,
Now the streets are bad for carting and the engine's
slow in starting

And the jacket's on the radiator now.

When the winter top is fitted summer's balminess has
flitted

But the bite of wintry breezes seems afar,
And there's lots of time remaining while the autumn's
gently waning

When the robes and top are useless on the car;
But we know that winter's nearing when the hoods be-
gin appearing

With their neatly quilted covers on the prow,
So we seek the proper channels for the purchase of our
flannels

For the jacket's on the radiator now.

B-R-R-R- (continued)

It's the time for furs and heaters in the six and seven
seaters

When the engine wears an overcoat outside,
It's a time when chauffeurs shiver in a Panhard or a
Flivver

And an open car's an awful thing to ride,
Yes, the chill and arctic blizzard penetrates the very
gizzard

And on country roads you really need a plough,
As the mercury is falling and the engine often stall-
ing—

For the jacket's on the radiator now.

Now's the time when tropic touring looks exceedingly
alluring

As your nose gets blue and bluer in the breeze,
And the steering wheel is yanking 'spite of chains for-
ever clanking

And the gasoline is liable to freeze,
Now's the season when you coddle dreams of owning
next year's model

And a hopeful glow irradiates your brow,
Now—to sum it all together—comes the real old win-
ter weather

For the jacket's on the radiator now!

THE MISANTHROPE

MOSTLY I love my fellow men,
But I get weary now and then
Of all they do and all they say,
Their way of work, of life, of play,
And on occasions such as that
I hie me to my little flat
And glower at the world, and swear
At everybody everywhere!

In wrathful dreams I take a poke
At all my friends, my foes I choke,
The idle rich, the common host,
The good and bad alike I roast,
And when the slaughter is complete
(Within my mind), why, life is sweet!
I am not often taken thus
But when I am—I'm murderous!

Mostly, I say, I love mankind,
Its funny ways I do not mind,
But just about two times a year
If I could see my pathway clear,
I'd go and find some gloomy cave
Where I could sit and rave and rave
And have my fill of angry fun
Hooting loud hoots at every one!

THE LIMIT

MY small change I can never save
In lackeys' pockets it doth clink,
The tipping habit holds me slave
Its fetters bind me, link by link;
I'm weak—a fact I may not blink—
I have no courage to employ,
Yet there are depths I cannot sink—
I will not tip the washroom boy!

I tip the barber for my shave,
The waiter, hatboy, and the gink
Who shines my shoes; I cannot brave
The bellhop's wrath, but slip him chink.
I dare not from the chauffeur slink
Without a tip, nor from the coy
Young dame who keeps my nails so pink;
But I won't tip the washroom boy!

Abas! that swart and stealthy knave
Who fills the washbowl to the brink
Whenas my hands I wish to lave,
Who comes with guileful smile and wink
And gives me scented soap. I think
He only does it to annoy,
Of nuisances he is the "kink,"
I will not tip the washroom boy!

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

THE LIMIT (continued)

Envoy

Prince, write this down in fadeless ink
This high resolve naught shall destroy,
Except to tip him in the drink,
I will not tip the washroom boy.

THE CYNICS' DIALOGUE

He

ONE surely cannot call me ultracynical,
In fact, I rather hate the sceptic touch;
But woman, smirking on the highest pinnacle
Of human virtue, irritates me much:
To me she seems a creature of fragility,
Her ways are undependable and vain,
And all her moods of careless instability
Give me a pain!

She

Men weary me, maintaining such an attitude;
Their arrogant assumptions I despise,
They're always spouting forth some moldy platitude
And then exclaiming: "Aren't we Great and Wise?"
The clumsy way they do things sets me wondering—
I don't see how they ever got this far,
Thick-witted creatures, every moment blundering,
That's what they are!

He

A woman's fad for dress is quite notorious—
It's only of such fripperies she thinks;

THE CYNIC'S DIALOGUE (continued)

She

It ill becomes a man to be censorious
Since men think mainly of their food—and drinks!

He

The women are the cause of “caste” and snobbery,
Their social bee is honestly a curse;

She

But men, in politics, make graft and jobbery,
And that is worse!

He

Let us assume some man should now disclose to you
His honest love—suppose that man were I—
Assume, with all his faults, he should propose to you:
How would you treat him, if he dared to try?

She

Well, if he'd be as tender as he could to me,
And never let the lamp of love burn dim,
If you—if He, I mean, would just be good to me,
I'd marry him!

HOT WEATHER

I WISH I were a polar bear, up north where heat
waves solar bear

Less heavily on animals and Esquimaux and such,
I'd take my ursine family and in an ice cave, clammily
And chillily we'd linger and enjoy it very much.

Or, if I were a whale, away through waters blue I'd
sail away

(Or swim, if you prefer it, but the other made a
rime)

To waters flowing frigidly where I could freeze up
rigidly

And have a cool vacation and a very pleasant time.

I'd give a pink begonia to bathe in pure ammonia,
("Begonia—ammonia"—no other rimes would do)

For though it suffocated me while it refrigerated me

I'd be completely heatless till the arctic bath was
through.

Oh strip me of my covering while all this heat is hov-
ering

And fill me full of liquid air, no matter what the
price,

I'm stuck to by my underwear and constantly I wonder
where

A man can find a tailor who could make a suit of ice.

FRANKNESS BETWEEN FRIENDS

SAYS Henry Smith to me one day,
"I got a few short words to say,
The which, I want it understood,
I'm tellin' you for your own good.
An' so I'll say, most free an' frank,
The way you act is something rank!
You drink too much, you smoke, you chew,
You swear like common sailors do,
You gamble too, an' lead a life
Most aggravatin' to your wife;
An' folks is sayin' all the time
The way you carry on's a crime!
Why don't you straighten up—I would—
I'm tellin' you for your own good!"

Says I to Mr. Henry Smith,
"Since we are just like kin an' kith,
An' since you told me where I fail
An' why I oughta be in jail,
I'll speak a little word or two
Explainin' what is wrong with you;
The hull of which, it's understood,
I'm tellin' you fer your own good.

"First then," I says, "you're such a cheat
You swindle every one you meet,
You chant your anthems in the church

FRANKNESS BETWEEN FRIENDS (continued)

An' leave your neighbor in the lurch;
You seize an' grab by force an' fraud
An' call it all the will uv God.
In short, to say it brief an' quit,
You're miser, crook an' hypocrite,
You'd rob a baby if you could—
I'm tellin' you for your own good!"

But Henry Smith was very queer,
He hit me just behind the ear;
"Of course," he says, "it's understood,
I'm sluggin' you for your own good!"

Five coppers come up in their cart
An' pried us old time friends apart,
They took their sticks uv loaded wood
An' clubbed us hard for our own good.

In court the Judge says, "Gentlemen,
Don't try to be so frank again,
Be chary of the words you speak
Lest you be swatted on the cheek;
I fine you ten—it's understood
I'm doing it for your own good."

The moral is, don't be too frank,
It gits you nuthin' at the bank,
Just keep your thoughts beneath your hood,
I'm tellin' you for your own good.

**BALLADS OF THE WORKADAY
ADVENTURERS**



OPPORTUNITY

WITH doubt and dismay you are smitten
 You think there's no chance for you, son?
Why, the best books haven't been written
 The best race hasn't been run,
The best score hasn't been made yet,
 The best song hasn't been sung,
The best tune hasn't been played yet,
 Cheer up, for the world is young!

No chance? Why the world is just eager
 For things that you ought to create
Its store of true wealth is still meagre
 Its needs are incessant and great,
It yearns for more power and beauty
 More laughter and love and romance,
More loyalty, labor and duty,
 No chance—why there's nothing but chance!

For the best verse hasn't been rhymed yet,
 The best house hasn't been planned,
The highest peak hasn't been climbed yet,
 The mightiest rivers aren't spanned,
Don't worry and fret, faint hearted,
 The chances have just begun,
For the Best jobs haven't been started,
 The Best work hasn't been done.

THE ADDED INGREDIENT

BUILDER, make me a house,
Giving your skill and care to it,
Build it sturdy and strong
With comfort and warmth and wear to it.

Builder, make me a house
With all of your wisest thought in it,
With some of the hopes you've known
And some of the dreams you've sought in it.

Build it the best you know
From roof to the basement loam of it,
And I will find me a girl
And *she* will make me a home of it!

TRIBUTE

HE was a big man, fellows,
And lived as a big man should,
He was five feet six in his stocking feet
But let it be understood
He was six feet five in the soul of him
And all fine metal, the whole of him.

Yes, "big" is the word that fits him,
For only his frame was small,
There was nothing little and nothing mean
In the heart of his heart, at all;
He met with a smile what came to him
And life was a great big game to him.

He held himself to a standard
A code that was clean and high,
But looked on the failings of others
With a tolerant, kindly eye;
Though again and again deceived in them,
He loved his friends—and believed in them.

He never was out for trouble
Yet when there was need to fight,
He fought to the last ounce in him
For what he believed was right,
Winning, he scarcely spoke of it;
Losing, he made a joke of it.

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

TRIBUTE (continued)

For he was a big man, fellows,
And when I am lifeless clay,
I'd like to think you could look on me
As you do on him, and say,
"A man's brave soul was expressed in him
He was Big—and true to the best in him!"

START WHERE YOU STAND

(When a man who had been in the penitentiary applied to Henry Ford for employment, he started to tell Mr. Ford his story. "Never mind," said Mr. Ford, "I don't care about the past. Start where you stand!")

START where you stand and never mind the past,
The past won't help you in beginning new,
If you have left it all behind at last
Why, that's enough, you're done with it, you're
through;
This is another chapter in the book,
This is another race that you have planned,
Don't give the vanished days a backward look,
Start where you stand.

The world won't care about your old defeats
If you can start anew and win success,
The future is your time, and time is fleet
And there is much of work and strain and stress;
Forget the buried woes and dead despairs,
Here is a brand new trial right at hand,
The future is for him who does and dares,
Start where you stand.

Old failures will not halt, old triumphs aid,
To-day's the thing, to-morrow soon will be;

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

START WHERE YOU STAND (continued)

Get in the fight and face it, unafraid

And leave the past to ancient history;

What has been, has been; yesterday is dead

And by it you are neither blessed or banned,

Take courage, man, be brave and drive ahead,

Start where you stand!

NEWARK—THE BUILDER

(This Poem won one of the Prizes at the Newark Anniversary Celebration, 1917.)

NEVER a jungle is penetrated,
Never an unknown sea is dared,
Never adventure is consummated,
Never a faint new trail is fared,
But that some dreamer has had the vision
Which leads men on to the ends of earth,
That laughs at doubting and scorns derision
And falters not at the cynic's mirth.

So the dreamer dreams, but there follows after
The mighty epic of steel and stone,
When caisson, scaffold and wall and rafter
Have made a fact where the dream was shown,
And so with furnace and lathe and hammer,
With blast that rumbles and shaft that gleams,
Her factories crowned with a grimy glamor
Newark buildeth the dreamer's dreams.

Where the torrent leaps with a roar of thunder,
Where the bridge is built or the dam is laid,
Where the wet walled tunnel burrows under
Mountain, river and palisade,
There is Newark's magic of nail or girder,
Of spikes and castings and posts and beams,

NEWARK—THE BUILDER (continued)

The needs and wants of the world have spurred her
Newark—city that builds our dreams.

She has fashioned tools for the world's rough duty,
For the men that dig and the men that hew,
She has fashioned jewels for wealth and beauty,
She has shod the prince and the pauper, too.
Yes, the dreamer dreams, he's the wonder waker,
With soul that hungers and brain that teems,
But back of him toils the magic maker,
Newark—city that builds his dreams.

THE ENDLESS BATTLE

THERE is no hope, and yet I keep on fighting.
There is no chance, and yet I fight the more.
Fate's holocaust is loosed against me, blighting
My dream of triumph that I held of yore;
Sick am I, sick unto the very core
Of heavy wrongs there is no way of righting,
Yea, I am weary of the battle roar
Beneath black skies no sun is ever lighting.

I see no gleam of victory alluring,
No chance of splendid booty or of gain,
If I endure I must go on enduring
And my reward for bearing pain—is pain;
Yet, though the hope, the thrill, the zest are gone,
Something within me keeps me fighting on!

BUSINESS IS BUSINESS

BUSINESS is Business," the Little Man said,
"A battle where 'everything goes,'
Where the only gospel is 'get ahead,'
And never spare friends or foes,
'Slay or be slain,' is the slogan cold,
You must struggle and slash and tear,
For Business is Business, a fight for gold,
Where all that you do is fair!"

"Business is Business," the Big Man said,
"A battle to make of earth
A place to yield us more wine and bread
More pleasure and joy and mirth;
There are still some bandits and buccaneers
Who are jungle-bred beasts of trade,
But their number dwindles with passing years
And dead is the code they made!

"Business is Business," the Big Man said,
"But it's something that's more, far more;
For it makes sweet gardens of deserts dead,
And cities it built now roar
Where once the deer and the grey wolf ran
From the pioneer's swift advance;
Business is Magic that toils for man
Business is True Romance.

BUSINESS IS BUSINESS (continued)

“And those who make it a ruthless fight
Have only themselves to blame
If they feel no whit of the keen delight
In playing the Bigger Game,
The game that calls on the heart and head,
The best of man’s strength and nerve;
Business is Business,” the Big Man said,
“And that Business is to serve!”

THE SHOPS

FACTORIES are crude and ugly places
Even at best, and most of them are filled,
With belts and shafts, machinery that races,
And men with heavy hands and grimy faces,
And noise, noise, noise!—noise that is ever spilled
Upon the air like molten, white hot steel
So fierce it is; noise that is ground and shrilled,
Pounded and shrieked and hummed,
Clattered and drummed—
Noise of the furnace and the hammer, squeal
Of monster planers, crunch of giant shears,
Rumble of rollers thudding on the ears
With most intolerable clamor, yet these places
Are where the dreams are built.
—Through far flung spaces
The long trains thunder; over vasty seas
The ships move on superbly; towers rise
Graceful and strong against the arching skies
Of roaring cities,—miracles like these
—All the huge wonders of this plangent time—
Are born of ugly shops bedimmed with grime.

THE PRICE OF FISH

THE tang of seas is in them, the power and the
might,
They bring a thrill of tempests and combers breaking
white,
Their faces spell Adventure and in their darting glance
There burns the quenchless glory of those who *live*
Romance,
Yet, though they brave destruction and ever play with
death
And danger is their comrade whenever they draw
breath,
The wonder of their toiling is quite beyond their ken
It's only daily labor for Deep Sea Fishermen!

The tacking out of harbor past every rock and shoal,
The lift and sag and shudder when heaving combers
roll,
The rush of deep sea breezes, the sting of deep sea
spray
Are only common items in a common working day,
These tried and true adventurers are dreaming not at
all,
They speak of wind and weather and the chances of
a haul,
And when your hours for sleeping are less than one in
ten
You'll do as little dreaming as Deep Sea Fishermen!

THE PRICE OF FISH (continued)

The fog may bring disaster—a liner, looming high—
(Can twenty thousand tonners look out for smaller
fry?)

And when it's "Dories over"—and grey clouds turn
to black

You gamble with your Maker that you'll be coming
back;

It's work and sweat and peril from bait to dressing
down,

—And all to feed the Hungry who crowd the busy
town,

The fleet puts back to Gloucester—and widows wail
again

And so our fish is paid for—by Deep Sea Fishermen!

THE SCAB

OF all the pore benighted dubs,
The saddest is the Scab
What works on bum non-union tubs,
Say, honest, he's a crab.
The way he works would make you laugh
An' even if he'd try
He couldn't never earn one-half
What's paid the Union guy.

He'll eat the grub a Chink wud spurn
An' think he's lucky, too;
He'll sleep on beds they ought to burn
Which same they never do;
He's kicked an' banged around the boat
Until he's weak an' faint,
The scab is sure an awful goat
Although he thinks he ain't.

I'm kinda sorry fer the scab
He ain't so much to blame,
Cheap jobs is all he has to grab
An' so he grabs the same.
He's hooted every place he goes,
His life is very glum,
Poor gink, I'm sorry fer his woes—
The low down dirty bum!

VALE "BUFFALO BILL"

GOOD-BYE, old Scout; you've done with
crowded places

Where once was open range for you to roam,
But we can hope you ride in freer spaces,
Scouting above us in the sky's blue dome;
For in your blood there stirred the restless leaven
Which makes a rover fret within the fold,
You could not rest, complacent, in a heaven
With walls about, although they be of gold.

From some great herd of untamed spirit horses,
God, who is wise, will let you rope your own,
And ride him, bucking, over trackless courses,
Spurring on, joyous, through the vast unknown.
Now and again, perchance, you will assemble
A spirit band out of the long ago,
And Heaven's hosts will thrill and chill and tremble
At ghostly riders in your Wild West Show.

But most, we know you will be tasting danger
Where reckless nebulae are running free,
You will be Heaven's dauntless, happy Ranger
Hunting mad asteroids that flare and flee.
You could not be content to hymn and psalm it
Plucking at harpstrings in a golden jail,
But we shall see you—as a blithe new comet—
Tracking wild stars upon the astral trail!

THE WELL SHOOTER

(In the Pennsylvania and New York oil fields there are comparatively few oil wells that "flow" of themselves. They have to be pumped. To facilitate pumping and to quicken the underground flow of oil, nitroglycerine is lowered to the bottom of the well and set off by the concussion of a "go-devil" or chaser dropped on top of it. The man in charge of this difficult and dangerous work is called a well shooter.)

WHEN the derrick is built and the well is drilled

To the oil sands down below,
They send around for the guy who's skilled
In helpin' that oil to flow;
For it may be big and it may be not,
But you can't 'most always tell,
Till after that nitro charge is shot
By the feller who shoots the well.

He's a nitroglycerin Johnny,
With a kind of a breezy way;
The smile of the scamp is bonny
An' the talk of the lad is gay.
To care he seems a stranger,
An' you never on earth could tell
That he works in deadly danger
This feller who shoots the well.

THE WELL SHOOTER (continued)

His auto it rattles acrost the hills,
An' it makes you hold your breath,
An' it gives you a lovely set of chills
When you think of his load of death,
With that nitroglycerin sloppin' about
An' him a-singin' free,
Though he knows if a can of the stuff fell out
He'd muss up the scenery!

He's a nitroglycerin kiddo
An' he's got to keep his wits,
Or he'll leave his wife a widow
To a lot of scattered bits.
He needs a head that's level
An' a nerve that you can't dispel,
An' he mustn't fear man or devil,
This feller who shoots the well.

He lowers them long torpedoes through
The hole that the drills has made,
An' you notice he does it careful, too,
For his is a risky trade.
Then he lets that iron devil drop
An' he runs like Billy Hell,
An' a geyser climbs to the derrick top
—An' you know that he's shot the well.

An' whether the well is splendid
Or a kind of a pindlin' one,
His part of the work is ended,
His share of the job is done.

A BANJO AT ARMAGEDDON

THE WELL SHOOTER (continued)

With his lips a-whistlin' happy
An' his hat cocked on his knob,
This nitroglycerin chappy
Moves on to another job!

THE ELECTRICIAN

WHERE the sparks of the white-hot welder play,
Where the searchlights stab at the fogbank
grey,

Where the bright lights glare on the Great White
Way,

The Slave of the Lamp is lurking,
The Slave of the Lamp, yet the Master too,
The wizard of light in a world made new
Where the fairy tales of the past come true
And the dreams of the past are working!

The power house is his charge to keep,
Where the dynamos whir and the blue sparks leap,
And death is waiting—if caution sleep—

In the midst of the day's endeavour,
For if ever that harnessed might breaks loose
From the chains that hold it bound for use,
The Slave of the Lamp—and Boss of the Juice—
Is done with the Job, forever!

He tinkers away at the trolley wire
Or jauntily dares the third rail's ire,
That things may run to his heart's desire
And the work of the world hold steady.
Would you hire a man who is schooled to jolts,
Who can play ping pong with the thunderbolts
And juggle away with a million volts?

The Slave of the Lamp is ready!

THE HEART OF THE MINE

SOMETIMES my heartbeats, calm and slow,
Seem like the sound of long ago;
The rhythmic pulsing of my blood
Is like the steady throb and thud
The air compressors used to play
All night and day, all night and day,
Where, at the shaft, there formed the line
Of miners going down the mine!

The pumps below would thump and sob,
But up on top was just the throb
Of huge compressors never still
Storing the air that runs each drill,
And singing endlessly this song,
"Be strong, be strong, be strong, be strong!"
And strong we were, who formed the line
Of miners going down the mine!

So now, afar from slope and drift,
From running drill or changing shift,
My very heartthrobs serve to call
My thoughts back surely to it all;
I seem to hear as music sweet
The air compressors' steady beat,
To be a portion of the line
Of miners going down the mine!

THE HEART OF THE MINE (continued)

Comes swiftly to me as of yore
The "hough!" of engines hoisting ore,
The hoot of whistles, and the shock
Of air drills gouging at the rock;
And, somehow, down within me deep
Awakes the ghost I thought asleep,
The lure of days I joined the line
Of miners going down the mine!

THE REPORTER

HERE'S your True Adventurer, here's your errant
Knight,
Here's your loyal soldier, unafraid,
Tackling any worriment, chancing any fight;
Trouble's but the business of his trade;
Cool and unabashable, humorous of eye,
Cynical and flippant in his views,
Watching all life's comedy as it passes by,
Giving you its stories—in the news!

Here's your True Adventurer, ever on the job.
When there's something doing, he is there!
Battle, murder, sudden death—fire or angry mob,
These are varied perils he must dare;
Send him to the tropic swamps, send him to the pole,
Send him forth on any quest you choose;
He will serve you faithfully, heart and brain and soul,
Braving any dangers for the news!

Here's your True Adventurer, servant of the Press—
Just a plain reporter on the street,
Chronicler of human life, failure and success,
Cryer of romances, sad or sweet!
Playing *for* the gallery, never *to* the gallery,
Nothing ever moves him to dismay,
So he serves the world of men for a paltry salary;
Here's your True Adventurer, To-day!

NOMAD

WHEN Adam beat a swift retreat,
From Eden's sunny strand,
And with his wife began his life
Within a foreign land,
If you should trace his settling place
To dreary climes or fair,
I'll bet a drink you'd find a Chink—
John Chinaman was there!

You sing of men whose ships have been
Across uncharted seas;
But who has sung the clan far flung,—
The patient, calm Chinese?
Both near and far, he keeps bazaar,
Wherever men may fare,
They'll find his store has gone before,
John Chinaman is there!

Wide is the spell of Israel
Whose sons fare forth for gold;
But you find John still further on,
The trader, ages old.
No mountains grim can frighten him,
No rolling seas can scare;
From sweating Line to snow and pine,
John Chinaman is there!

THE FARMER

WHEN all the songs of labor have been sung
 (Full of the clang of steel, the throb of steam,
The clatter of the hammers where is flung
 The fine spun bridge across the roaring stream)
When all the chants of labor have been said
 (Deep throated chants from mighty bosoms hurled)
Mine is the chant of chants, the Song of Bread
 I am the Master—for I feed the World!

The toilers of the factories and mines
 The workers of the rivers and the seas,
The heavy-muscled hewers of the pines,
 The idlers 'mid their unearned luxuries,
At last must look to Me, aye, one and all
 Without me armies fail and flags are furled,
Without me kingdoms die and Empires fall,
 I am the Master, for I feed the World!

Beneath the blazing sun I do my toil
 With straining back and overburdened thews,
Sowing the seed and reaping from the soil
 The corn and wheat and rice that men must use,
Patient and strong I bend me to my work,
 Life eddies round me like a dust-cloud whirled,
For this I know, despite the sweat and irk,
 I am the Master, for I feed the World!

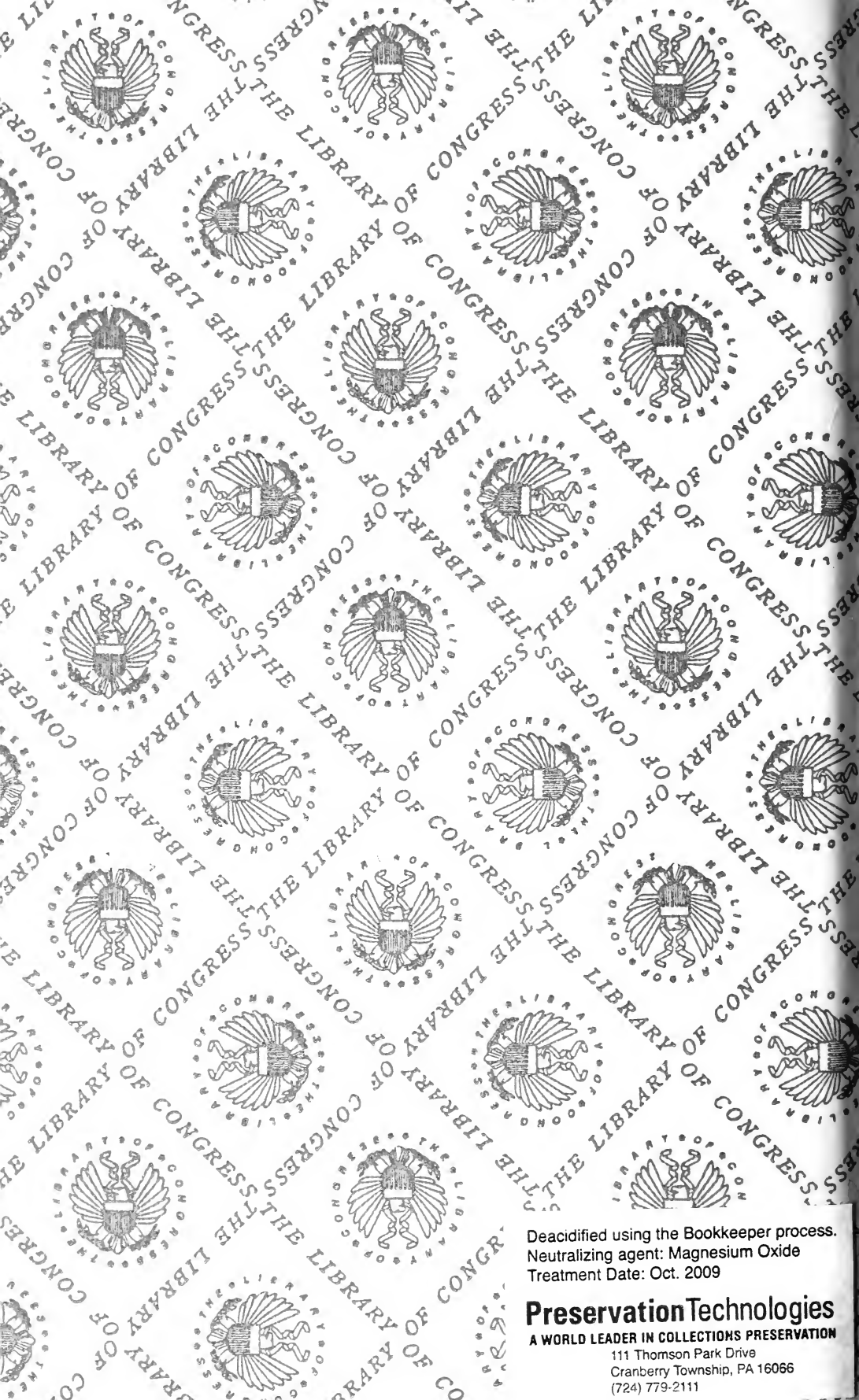
THE JOY OF LIFE

I'D rather risk gamely
And lose for my trying
Than grind around tamely
—A cog in the mill.
I'd rather fail greatly
With courage undying
Then plod on sedately
With never a thrill!

The game's in the playing
And, losing or winning,
The fun's in essaying
Your bravest and best,
In taking your chances
While Fate's wheel is spinning,
And backing your fancies
With nerve and with zest!

Let stodgy folk censure
And timid folk quaver,
But life sans adventure
Is weary to bear,
The dangers we're sharing
Give living its savour,
I'd rather die daring
Than never to dare!





Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Oct. 2009

Preservation Technologies
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